

Rich-Higgins House
Longnook Road
Truro
Barnstable County
Massachusetts

HABS No. MA-718

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

THE RICH-HIGGINS HOUSE

HABS No. MA-718

Location South side of Long Nook Road between Higgins Hollow Road and Long Nook Beach, in the Town of Truro, Barnstable County, Massachusetts.

Present Owner Arthur F. Musgrave, Box 1722, Santa Fe, New Mexico.

Present Occupant Mr. and Mrs. Arthur F. Musgrave.

Present Use Summer residence.

Significance This residence consists of two houses - a Cape Cod "double house" of the 18th century on the west, and a Cape Cod "house and a half" of the 19th century on the east, and are joined together to make one house. These have the early Cape Cod characteristics both on the exteriors and for the most part, on the interiors.

The location is within the area of the proposed Cape Cod National Seashore.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Original and subsequent owners Irving Hale Rich (1853-1927) owned the house on the east in its present location. After inheriting the "double house" which was located farther east, he moved it and attached it to the east house. Irving was a brother of the Truro historian Shebnah Rich, who lived across the road in what is now known as the L'Engle house. Shebnah, in writing about this house that was moved, apparently, said the house was built "over a hundred years ago by my grandfather Joshua Rich, and has had no changes or innovations for fifty years. It is now owned and occupied by Leonard P. Rich, and is the easternmost house in Longnook Hollow." Truro---Cape Cod or Land Marks and Sea Marks, Shebnah Rich (Boston, 1884) p. 340.

This would date the house prior to 1784. On the west gable of this house is the date "1778".

Miss Marion Rich, a grand niece of Mrs. Shebnah Rich, verified the fact that Irving moved this house to its present location. Miss Rich now lives in Truro, off of Castle Road.

Date of erection

West double house - 1778.

East house and a half - ca. 1830, dated tentatively by Dr. Ernest Allen Connally, HABS Historian and Architect.

Architect Unknown. Houses were remodeled to some extent by John Perkins Brown, Architect, formerly of Boston, in the early 1940's.

Builder Unknown.

Original plans None known to exist.

Alterations and additions When the west house was attached to the east house, the north entrance was made into a bath room, with a small addition to the north side of the house. The stairway has been moved to its present location, (See "floor plans", this report). A west porch was removed by the present owner in the 1930's and a brick terrace and grape arbor replaced it. Dormers were added by the present owner in the 1930's. A fire in the west house in the 1940's caused considerable damage. Repairs included widening the original kitchen fireplace and paneling and installation of two ceiling beams in the original kitchen. These repairs were under the direction of John Perkins Brown, Architect.

Historical events connected with the structure None have been uncovered which are extremely important. The Rich family, however, was one of the early Cape Cod families which played an important part in the development of this part of the Cape. The present owner, Arthur F. Musgrave, has a good reputation as an artist, and his summer studio is attached to the east house.

Important old views Mr. Musgrave has a few old post card photos showing the west side of the two houses before the present trees were planted. A picture in Shebna Rich's book quoted above, on page 340 shows a "double house" which he said was the one that was owned by Joshua Rich.

Sources of information Proper documentation was made in the text above with the exception of an article by Dr. Ernest Allen Connally, "The Cape Cod House: An Introductory Study", soon to appear in The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians.

Likely sources not yet investigated Truro Town Records and Barnstable County Records, although the latter are incomplete prior to 1827 because of a fire in the Court House which destroyed many of the records which included some of the earlier Register of Deeds books.

Prepared by

Charles S. Dotts
Charles S. Dotts, Architect
HABS Cape Cod Survey I
Summer, 1960, June 28.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

GENERAL STATEMENT

Architectural interest and merit As mentioned on page 1 of this report, this residence consists of two houses - a Cape Cod "double house" of about 1778 and a Cape Cod "house and a half" ca. 1830. These are joined together to make one residence. The exteriors and interiors, for the most part, retain the early character of the Cape Cod houses and they are excellent existing examples. This residence is located within the area of the proposed National Sea Shore on Cape Cod.

Condition of fabric Very good. The present owner has kept the place in good repair.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE EXTERIOR

Overall dimensions "Double" or west house: 28'-6" north and south x 31'-6" east and west. "House and a half" or east house: 25' north and south x 28' east and west.

Foundations Brick.

Wall construction None of the walls in either house are exposed. From the dates of the houses and from the appearance of the exterior walls, with exposed corner posts, it is presumed that the walls are constructed of vertical planks on wood sills and top girts. This type of construction has been found on other similar Cape Cod houses. The exteriors are shingled, painted white, with 5" exposure.

Porches, stoops, etc. Brick and concrete/^{modern}stoops at entrances. Brick terrace with grape arbor at west side of the west house.

Chimneys Both houses have central brick chimneys painted white, with black caps.

Openings - doorways and doors 6 panel exterior doors in the west house. 6 panel exterior doors also in the east house with a 4 light transom over the north door. The top 2 panels of this door have "bull's eye" glass in them.

windows and shutters Louvered shutters on both houses. Windows in west house are 9/6 panes in double hung sash, first floor and 9/6 and 6/6 panes in double hung sash, second floor. These are the same in the east house.

Roof - shape, covering Both houses have gabled, pitched roofs with composition shingles, modern type.

cornice, eaves Wood, box cornice, narrow eaves, both houses.

dormers Two dormers added on the south in 1930's by present owner, west house. Half length dormer added at same time on the west of the east house.

THE INTERIORS

Floor plans

West house: Front of the house faces the north, although the front entrance has been closed and an addition there encloses a bath room. This is flanked by a two window east room and by a two window west room. Back of these was apparently the original kitchen, now a living room. Doors join this to both the east and the west rooms. Prior to the 1940's when this house was remodeled, the west end of the kitchen enclosed a buttery and small bed room, as seen in similar Cape Cod houses. The partitions were removed and the original kitchen is now one large room. This house is joined to the east house with a doorway in the south east corner of this room. The original stairs which were apparently off of the front entrance, were moved at an unknown date to their present location between the east room and the original kitchen. The second floor has been changed from the original double house plans of similar houses.

East house: This "house and a half" is oriented to the west, which is not typical of other Cape Cod houses which face the south. The main entrance was probably on the west side of the house and was flanked on the north by a small room and on the south by a two window room. This small north room was converted to a hall when the two houses were joined and this now serves as a passage way between them. The original stairway in this area was changed by the present owner to a circular stair.

To the rear, or east side of this house is a room which was apparently the original kitchen. To the south of this room was the buttery and small bed room. These are intact.

The other parts of this combined residence include a modern kitchen, a breezeway (enclosed) and a studio-garage. These were built at unknown dates.

Stairs One in west house to second floor, one in east house. See plans, above.

Flooring Random width pine boards, 8" to 16" wide.

Wall and ceiling finish West house: plastered walls with wood wainscoting to window stool height in west room, and in east room on the south wall. East and north walls of the east room have recently built bookshelves to the window stool height. The west wall has fireplace paneling. Ceilings are plastered.

East house: East room, or original kitchen, presumably, has plastered walls and wainscot to window stool height except the west wall has fireplace paneling with china cupboard and storage space. This is also true of the main or south room with the fireplace located on the north wall. Ceilings in this house are plastered.

Doorways and doors Both houses, first floor, have "holy cross" or "Christian" 6 panel wood doors, with crosses.

Trim West house: Exposed corner posts and girts, mitered molded door and window trim. Good fireplace paneling in the east room, west room, and original kitchen. The east house has mitered and decorative molding at the doorways and windows.

Dr. Connally, who was mentioned in Part I of this report, in a letter dated August 27, 1959 to the Supervising Architect, Historic Structures (Eastern Office Division of Design and Construction, Philadelphia) reported that in the west double house, "the two front rooms still possess fine mantels with bolection mouldings and panelled over-mantels--two of the finest interiors in the proposed park. These mantels correspond closely to those in the Howes-Jorgenson House at Dennis....dated between 1766 and 1788."

Hardware There are early type HL and H hinges with old latches in both houses.

Lighting Electric.

Heating Hot water heat, radiators. Fireplaces as mentioned above.

SITE

Orientation This residence with the two houses, modern kitchen, breezeway, and studio-garage, is located on the south side of the road in a very pleasant setting.

Enclosures Post and rail fence at the north edge of the property next to the road; picket fence and stockade fence are located west and east of the house, respectively.

Outbuildings None.

Walks, driveways Crushed oyster shell walks; gravel drive from road to parking space east of the residence, and to the garage.

Landscaping, gardens This entire area is very impressive. The lawn, shrubbery and trees are well trimmed. There is a flower and vegetable garden east of the house. Planting is informal.

Prepared by

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Charles S. Dotts, Architect
HABS Cape Cod Survey I
Summer, 1960, June 28.

References:

HABS measured drawings, Cape Cod Survey I, Eastham Field Office, Summer 1960.